

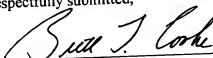
REMARKS

Independent claims 1 and 8 are amended to add the limitations that the locking openings are disposed in the locking handle and the adjustment link. These limitations are not taught by any of the cited prior art. This arrangement has distinct advantage over both Morrison (U.S. Patent No. 4,889,026), which requires a special pad lock not readily available, and Mills (U.S. Patent No. 5,197,359), which is more complex to manufacture. Amended claims 1 and 8 are believed to be patentably distinct. Dependent claims 5 and 12 are amended to comport with amended claims 1 and 8, and claims 4, 7, 11, and 14 are cancelled without prejudice.

New method claims 15-18 are added. The claims are fully supported by the specification and add no new matter.

In summary, patentable claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 12-13, and 15-18 remain in the application and are believed to be in condition for allowance. Allowance of claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 12-13, and 15-18 and passage to issue is requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: Oct. 20, 2004
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